



## **Nebraska Adjutant General Conducts Town Hall Meetings**

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LINCOLN, Neb. -- "We've got a great team. We will get through this. We will survive this."

That was one of the key messages Maj. Gen. Daryl Bohac, Nebraska adjutant general, brought to four town hall meetings held in Lincoln, Neb., Oct. 7-8, to update members of the Nebraska Military Department on the latest information about the partial federal government shutdown. He also welcomed back the majority of the 560 federal civilian and dual-status technicians who were recalled to work after spending nearly a week on unpaid furlough.

"Welcome back to our technicians," said Bohac during the first town hall meeting held at the Joint Force headquarters building. "We're glad to have you back in the building again. I can tell you that (my wife) Kris and I had you in our thoughts...we're very glad to have you back."

"That's the good news," Bohac said. "The bad news is we still have a few people on furlough on the technician side... please keep these folks in your thoughts. The other reality we have is, because we have no new funds that have come in to fund our cooperative agreements, we still have (around 70) state employees who support our Soldiers and Airmen in the Nebraska Military Department on unpaid furlough as well."

The affected state employees, who are either fully or partially funded, work in such areas as the state facilities management office, civil engineering and at the base fire department in Lincoln.

"Please keep those folks that are still furloughed in your thoughts as we move forward," Bohac added during the Oct. 8 meeting at the 155th Air Refueling Wing's operations group theater. "Because for those folks, money is going to get tighter and it's not going to get better."

According to Bohac, the shutdown has also impacted the Nebraska National Guard's ability to spend money from its operations and maintenance accounts. While that won't affect the Guard's ability to conduct annual training, it does negatively impact its ability to pay for such things as fuel, office and training supplies and replacement parts.

"We're not anywhere near business as usual," Bohac said. "I think you all know that, because the reality is, we have no operations and maintenance funds."

"There is no approval or authority to buy anything," he added at the Air Guard meeting. "We're just going to have to operate that way for the foreseeable future. That's a challenge for us

because as time continues on, we're going to see a degradation of readiness across the force – Army and Air.”

“What we will not have, though, is inability to respond to state emergencies,” Bohac said. “I’ve assured the governor several times that this Nebraska National Guard stands ready to respond if needed in this state. That is unchanged. We proved that by having a limited response to the tornado in Wayne, (Neb.)... those activities will continue.”

Additionally, while the Pay Our Military Act – which was passed by the Congress and signed into law by President Obama prior to the Oct. 1 shutdown – was eventually interpreted by the Departments of Defense and Justice to allow affected military and civilian technicians to return to duty and for the Guard to conduct annual training exercise, it does not currently allow the Guard to conduct weekend unit training assemblies.

“We will have to make the call early next week over whether or not units will be drilling on the weekend of the 19th and 20th,” said Bohac. “And then we will begin to develop courses of action of when we might be able to make up that drill.”

“We fully expect to be able to have 48 UTAs in the course of (Fiscal Year) 14. The question is when,” he added.

Bohac said one of the reasons he is delaying the decision on the Oct. 19-20 drill is because of potential impacts on those younger enlisted Soldiers and Airmen who depend upon their drill checks to help them get through the month.

In the Nebraska Air National Guard, traditional part-time Air Guardsmen make up more than 70 percent of the organization while in the Army Guard, they make up more than 80 percent.

“They’re why we’re here,” Bohac said. “They’re why we serve in this day-to-day effort... to take care of them.”

“I look to you as the full-time force to help lead our traditional force through this... and we will get through it,” Bohac said. He then asked the enlisted leaders in each of the audiences to reach out and contact their traditional Soldiers and Airmen to address their concerns and point them toward resources available if times become tough.

“There are resources out there for folks,” Bohac said.

Bohac also cautioned the Soldiers and Airmen who attended each of the town hall meetings that while the Pay Our Military Act did allow active service members and technicians to continue to work, there are still some concerns about whether or not there may be some delays in receiving paychecks.

“You will be paid,” said Bohac. “It’s not a question of if, it is a question of when.”

Because of this uncertainty, Bohac encouraged the Guardsmen and civilian employees to take whatever precautions they can to be prepared. He also told the assembled groups that if they do find themselves in financial difficulties because of the shutdown, to contact their supervisors who will direct them to the various services that are available. A list of furlough-related services, frequently asked questions, and other furlough-related information is also available at the Nebraska National Guard’s public [www.ne.ng.mil](http://www.ne.ng.mil) website.

Bohac closed each of the meetings expressing his appreciation for the sacrifices the entire Nebraska Military Department workforce is making during the lapse in federal funding and the attitude people were taking with them as they confronted the myriad of issues arising from the partial shutdown.

“We’re in it together. We’re going to lead through it together. We’re going to solve it the best we can with the resources we’re given,” said Bohac. “So, let’s be smart about it as we go forward.”